

HAS RUSSIA SOLVED THE JEWISH PROBLEM?

An Inventory of the Postwar Situation

HARRY SCHWARTZ

OUTSIDE the United States, the Soviet Union has the largest number of Jews living in any one country today. What is the present status of the Jews in the USSR? To what extent do they enjoy freedom and equality in political, social, and economic life? How has the war affected their position in the Soviet family of nations? What is their future outlook?

At the outset, one must be reminded that the information available to help answer these questions is by no means as complete as the information we have on the situation of Jews, say, in England or Germany or even in Czechoslovakia at the western edge of the Soviet sphere of influence. Instead of deriving our information from free intercourse and communication with Soviet Jews, we must depend primarily upon the statements of the Soviet government and its officially approved

THE obstacles to obtaining reliable information and the prevalence of ideological prejudices, make difficult any clear picture of postwar Jewish life in the Soviet Union. Has Russia "solved the Jewish problem," as is often claimed? Obviously no simple black and white answer is possible. HARRY SCHWARTZ, assistant professor of economics at Syracuse University, here attempts the difficult task of opening a path for the objective discussion of the present situation of Russian Jews. Professor Schwartz did the larger part of his graduate research on the subject of Soviet economics, and has served as an expert on the Soviet Union for the United States Government. During the war, he was with the USSR intelligence group of the Office of Strategic Services and the State Department. He has written widely for newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals, and is the author of two books: *Seasonal Farm Labor in the United States* (1945) and *Russia's Post-War Economy* (1947). Professor Schwartz was born in New York City in 1919, and earned his doctorate at Columbia University.

Jewish spokesmen in the USSR, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Only a relatively small number of Americans, Jews and non-Jews, have had a chance to study the matter at first hand in the Soviet Union.

IT MAY be simplest to begin with the official Soviet picture of the position of the Jews in the Soviet Union. According to this account, in no land is the lot of Israel as bright as in the USSR. Anti-Semitism is forbidden by a law which is now almost thirty years old, as well as by the general prohibition of religious or racial discrimination contained in the Soviet constitution. In every field of activity, Soviet Jews have been given free opportunity to exercise their talents so that they can contribute most fruitfully to the general progress of the USSR. Nowhere in the world, we are assured, does Jewish culture flourish so gloriously as in the Soviet Union with its Yiddish newspapers, books, and theaters.

Two and a half million Jews, roughly a quarter of all surviving today, live in the USSR (the Joint Distribution Committee estimates 1,800,000). With the remaining fraction of European Jewry reduced largely to a mass of haunted and despairing refugees, it is comforting to believe that in the powerful Soviet Union there thrives a vigorous seedbed of Israel to carry on its traditions and its contribution to humanity.

But how true is this rosy picture? Can we accept the assurances of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow whose leaders are obviously handpicked by the Soviet government and whose Yiddish organ, *Einigkeit*, reads only like a translation of *Pravda*? Why is it that so little free communication exists between Jews in the USSR and those in other countries? Few

American Jews, except those with records of fervent pro-Soviet orientation, are admitted to the USSR. How much credence can be given to their sweeping conclusions, such as their invariable report that there is no anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union?

This writer keenly remembers the conversations he had with Soviet Jews in Berlin, officers in the Red Army, during the summer of 1945. Their words revealed the same neuroses, the same fears of anti-Semitism, and the same concern over the future of their people as one can find analogously among Jews in the Western world. Certainly they did not fit into the stereotype of the Soviet Jew presented by Communist propaganda and starry-eyed American travelers.

If the Jewish problem is solved in the USSR, how account for the case of the Polish Jews, who, given the choice of staying in the USSR as Soviet citizens or returning to the new Poland, voted in great numbers to go to Poland, despite their painful history there, and the present grim prospect? Did the experiences of these Polish Jews teach them, perhaps, that the realities of Soviet Jewish life are other than depicted in the popular legend?

II

FACED with these contradictions, let us try to study the available evidence for light on the complex picture of the Jewish position in the Soviet Union.

When Hitler began his attack on the USSR, the Soviet Union had about five million Jews in a population of over 190 million persons. Three million of these were Soviet citizens of long standing, roughly two-thirds of whom lived in the Ukraine and Byelorussia. The other two million Jews in the USSR in June 1941 lived in the areas which had been annexed during the preceding two years: Eastern Poland, the Baltic republics, Bessarabia, and Northern Bukovina. In early 1941, four out of the five million Soviet Jews lived in territory that Hitler conquered in the early stages of the Soviet-German conflict.

The Jews within the pre-annexation boundaries of the USSR were fully integrated into Russian life. They had made sharp advances. The lifting of the old Czarist barriers against Jewish entry into particular occupations had permitted many to go into new fields suiting their abilities and to win high public recognition. In 1897, more than half of all Russian Jews were small businessmen and traders; about 30 per cent were handicraftsmen and artisans; only 4 per cent worked in industry, and little more than 2 per cent in agriculture. By early 1939, on the other hand, almost half of all employed Jews were white collar and professional workers; roughly a quarter worked in industry; about 20 per cent were handicraft workers and artisans; and almost 6 per cent were in agriculture.

Most striking was the extremely important role of Jews as professional and technical workers in the rapidly expanding Soviet economy. Although in 1939 Jews were less than 2 per cent of the entire population of the USSR, they included about 17 per cent of all Soviet physicians, and about 10 per cent of all engineers, architects, scientists, university teaching personnel, artists, and writers. Jews formed almost as high a percentage of Soviet nurses, grade-school and high-school teachers, and bookkeeping and accounting personnel. Jews accounted for 10 per cent of all college students in 1939.

In one sector of Soviet life, but that the most vital, there was apparent before the war a steady diminution of Jewish personnel. This was in the top political leadership of the Communist party, which at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution had included such important figures as Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and others. In 1941 Lazar Kaganovich remained the one Jew in the Politburo, the pinnacle of Soviet policy-making.

But there seemed little reason to believe that anti-Semitism played any significant role in the elimination of Jews from political power. Jews and non-Jews were involved together on the losing side of the bitter intra-party struggles for power which rent the Communist party during the 20's and 30's,

All such losers paid the penalty of their defeat.

In the areas annexed by the USSR in 1939 and 1940, the situation of Jews was much less favorable. Russian annexation was followed by a vigorous effort to root out all possible opposition and to socialize all industrial and commercial capital.

To the extent that Jews had played significant roles in these annexed areas as leaders and members of non-Communist parties, whether of the Left or Right, as businessmen, and as prominent figures in public life, they were directly and adversely affected by the reorganization. Imprisonment in slave labor camps and execution, as in the case of Erlich and Alter, Socialist leaders, were the fates of the most unfortunate. At the other extreme a small fraction of Jews who had been Communists earlier or who conveniently became such later may well have improved their status under the new order of things.

SURVEYING the situation of all Jews in the USSR before Hitler's attack, there seems little doubt that they had made substantial progress under the Soviet regime and enjoyed equal citizenship with other groups. The legal ban on anti-Semitism was enforced. From time to time individuals were punished by jail sentences to emphasize the government's opposition to anti-Semites, and its adherence to the general Soviet policy of equal treatment for all nationalities.

The fact that Jews had equal rights with all Soviet citizens meant also that they suffered the limitations imposed by Soviet totalitarianism. Before the war, the religious Jew had to face the same atheistic propaganda and bear the same burden imposed by government anti-religious policy as the religious Christian or the religious Mohammedan. Zionism was forbidden as strictly as Ukrainian or any other kind of nationalism, and Zionists were persecuted for their beliefs. As Dr. Julius Margolin, a Zionist leader who spent five years in Soviet labor camps after fleeing Poland, wrote on his arrival in Palestine, "an entire generation of Zionists has died in Soviet prisons, camps, and exile."

Jews had to toe the line of political conformity or pay the same penalty as that exacted from Great Russian or Kazakh dissidents. Fundamentally, the Soviet Jew, like the Soviet Armenian, the Soviet Georgian, or the Soviet Osetian, had no individual rights which the state need respect. He was, in short, equal with all other subjects of the Soviet dictatorship, i.e. equally not a free citizen in the Western democratic sense.

These considerations help put the present position of Soviet Jews in the perspective of Soviet nationalities policy. Like many another Soviet nationality, the Jews made great progress in the thirty years since the Bolshevik Revolution, if we measure progress—as partially we must—by reference to rates of literacy, access to educational and economic advancement, and freedom from crude policies of Russification such as were followed at times by the Czarist regime.

But with respect to the Jews, as with other groups, we must appreciate that "cultural autonomy," "economic development," and similar minority group goals have a far different meaning in a totalitarian context than in a democratic setting. Where political liberty is dead, as in the USSR, cultural autonomy becomes little more than the right to sing the praises of the existing regime in Yiddish or Armenian as well as in Russian. Economic development, in the same environment, becomes the exploitation of local resources and minority group talents in the interests of the planned economy as a whole, even when—as not infrequently happens—the interests of State centralization and uniformity are contradictory to that of the particular interests of state centralization and uniform-group affected. Jewish traders were made destitute for years before they or their children were absorbed into the new Soviet economy. These facets of Soviet minority policy must be understood if the position of Jews and other minority groups in the Soviet Union today is to be evaluated correctly.

III

THAT virtually all the four million Jews inhabiting the Russian areas conquered

by Hitler did not die seems in large part due to the Soviet regime's evacuation of Jews during the military withdrawal from the Western USSR. Whether there was a preferential evacuation of Jews, or whether Jews were evacuated only insofar as they were economically valuable, is not clear. Jacob Lestchinsky (*New Leader*, March 8, 1947) claims the latter.

Uzbekistan, Bashkiria, Saratov, and other Eastern districts of the Soviet Union were flooded with tens of thousands of Jewish refugees, as well as with large numbers of others, non-Jews, fleeing before Hitler. These Eastern provinces had already received the vast majority of the 350,000 Jews who had earlier fled Nazi-occupied Poland into Russia, and who had been shipped eastward, many to forced labor camps, as compulsory exiles. Life was incredibly hard in these areas of refuge, as we have learned from the accounts of survivors, but those who were evacuated had a far better chance to remain alive than those who did not get out. For among these refugees were the additional workers sorely needed to man the expanded industry and agriculture in the East during the war.

In the Soviet armed forces, Jews carried out their patriotic obligations creditably and honorably. It has been estimated that more than half a million Jews served in the Red Army. Jews held fourth place among all the nationalities in the USSR ranked according to number of military awards, a position higher than their number warranted.

With the defeat of Hitler, a certain percentage of Soviet Jews evacuated from the West returned there to help in the reconstruction of these devastated areas. Most of the Polish Jews who survived the war after working in the East left the Soviet Union altogether. (It seems likely that a majority of them—almost 200,000, according to G. J. Gliksman's estimate in the *American Jewish Year Book*, 1947-1948—died in Russia.) Tens of thousands of Jews formerly resident in the West, however, have undoubtedly remained in the Urals, Siberia, and Central Asia. Most of the industry evacuated eastward during 1941-42 is remaining there, and with it re-

main the Jewish and non-Jewish workers, engineers, and managerial personnel who operated these plants during the war. Soviet Jewry is now far more widely dispersed over the USSR than ever before, and the old Jewish concentrations of the West, while to some extent reconstituted, are in large measure gone.

IN THE postwar Soviet Union, Jews continue to play an outstanding role as technicians, intellectuals, and workers. Among Stalin Prize winners for 1947 are included, for example, the mathematical physicist Frenkel, the pianist Goldenweiser, the metallurgist Friedman, the biochemist Rubin, and the agronomist Rudnitsky. Academician Joffe, an outstanding physicist, is reportedly one of the leaders in current Soviet atomic research, and academician Lina Stern, world-famous physiologist, has received wide Soviet recognition. Writers like Ilya Ehrenburg and David Zaslavsky have become internationally known as journalistic defenders of the Soviet point of view. At least one member of the Council of Ministers, Ginsburg, seems to be Jewish, as does Alexander Gor-kin, Secretary of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, who recently received the Order of Lenin as a reward for his services.

During the postwar period, too, Soviet Jews have more easily been able to support Judaism and to worship publicly and practice their religion than was the case before the war. Easing of the government opposition to organized religion, initiated most dramatically during the conflict, has continued. Soviet rabbis and Jewish congregations have a number of times declared their vigorous support of the Moscow regime, just as have priests and congregations of other religions. So long as organized Judaism in the USSR supports the government and remains an instrument for winning good will abroad, there will probably be no unfavorable treatment accorded it in comparison with other groups. Of course, this government policy is merely one of toleration, perhaps temporary and practical, and the traditional Communist po-

sition on the validity of religious belief is unchanged.

It would appear, then, that the Jews of the Soviet Union are relatively fortunate. They are bearing the hardships and suffering of postwar Soviet life in common with their fellows, but they would seem to have every opportunity to contribute to their society up to the limits of their talents. They are, apparently, not generally refused admission to medical school, or denied jobs, or kept away from certain neighborhoods or certain vacation spots.

IV

BUT this picture has flaws, serious flaws. The fear and trepidation of the Jewish Red Army officers mentioned earlier in this essay are not imaginary. They are based on important facts, on aspects of Soviet life today which Communist propagandists prefer to ignore or minimize.

It must be borne in mind that viewed historically a policy of national and religious equality is very new in what is now the USSR. Under the Russian Czars and other pre-Soviet rulers of this territory, hatred for Jews and other minority groups was deep and widespread. From the very beginning of the Bolshevik regime, it is true, a determined effort was made to stamp out such prejudice by use of every means of education and propaganda available. But from what we know of the causes of anti-Semitism generally, and of the virulence of anti-Semitism in Czarist and revolutionary Russia specifically, it would be naive to assume that anti-Semitism could be wiped out in a quarter of a century of Soviet rule.

Many of the developments in the Soviet Union in those years could not have helped but keep alive and even strengthen anti-Semitic feelings: the important role played by Jews—as well, of course, by other groups—in a party and government that aroused the hatred of the great mass of the Russian population—the peasantry, only superficially re-educated under the Soviet regime; the rapid rise of Jews, once restrictions were lifted, to responsible positions in Soviet life, such as

plant manager, engineer, doctor, government official; the heavy influx of Jews into such cities as Leningrad and Moscow, from which they had been banned under the Czar.

The war, shattering the careful control of entry and exit into the Soviet Union, permitted us to discover the wide extent of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. Lestchinsky has commented on the incredibly paltry numbers of Jews who survived the Nazis in the cities and towns of Nazi-occupied Russia, as compared with the number who managed to keep alive in the various countries of Western Europe: it is clear that a most important factor was the hostile attitude of the non-Jewish population, and in many cases their active participation in the killing of Jews.

Original anti-Semitic feelings had been fanned by Nazi propaganda and fears of reprisal. Richard Lauterbach has reported how the Nazis taunted the Ukrainians over the priority given Jews in evacuation, contrasting their "comfortable" life in distant Uzbekistan with the hardships of life under occupation. John Fischer has pointed out that Ukrainian anti-Semitism was stimulated by the inhabitants' fear they would have to return the property they had stolen from the Jews.

Whatever the weight one must give to the effects of Nazi propaganda, there was no question that the Ukrainian population showed itself violently anti-Semitic after the end of the war. This is the account of a Russian Jew who left Kharkov in March 1944, returned at the end of the year, and managed to make his way to Palestine in the middle of January, 1945:

"The Ukrainians received the returning Jews with open animosity. During the first weeks after the liberation of Kharkov no Jew ventured about alone in the streets at night. The position improved only after the intervention of the authorities, who reinforced the police patrols in the town. In many cases Jews were beaten in the market place, and once a Jew was actually killed by a Ukrainian. The peasants who were present during the attack in the marketplace began to quarrel with the police who were summoned to

the spot. All of them, including the murderer, were arrested. In Kiev 16 Jews were killed in the course of a pogrom which took place after the murder of a Russian officer by a Christian woman who was believed to be a Jewess.

"The Jews returning to their homes received no more than a small proportion of their property. Ukrainians summoned to court for possession of Jewish property were aided by other Ukrainians who gave false evidence against the Jews. . . .

"The Ukrainian authorities are openly anti-Semitic. Applications by Jews are not treated properly. When the Commercial Academy moved from Kharkov to Kiev, several Jewish professors applied for permission to go there, but their applications were rejected. They addressed themselves to the chairman of the Ukrainian Soviet but received no response. The Jewish theater was not allowed to return to Kharkov, and broadcasts in Yiddish were not resumed. The official answer to all Jewish representations is that the anti-Semitism with which the population has been infected by the Germans can only be uprooted gradually." (From the *Bulletin* of the Joint Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, March 1945.)

Anti-Semitism was not confined to the Western areas. We have the word of so reliable a reporter as Harrison Salisbury that anti-Semitism revealed itself openly in certain circles of the Moscow intelligentsia early in the war. He indicates that reports of special preference for Jews in the evacuation of Moscow when it was threatened by the oncoming Germans received wide currency in that city, and aroused substantial resentment. It required the drastic intervention of the powerful Shcherbatov, Politburo member in charge of all propaganda work, to stop the open manifestation of these anti-Semitic attitudes.

The report quoted above also comments on the increase in anti-Semitism in Kirghizia in Russian Turkestan following the admittance of Jewish refugees. This is an aspect of the situation that is generally overlooked. The resident population apparently resented

these strangers who were crowded into a restricted living space and created further drains upon the limited quantities of food, clothing, and other necessities. Even under the best of circumstances, the sudden bringing together of large groups of persons of different cultures and languages is likely to be accompanied by widespread misunderstanding and animosity.

Perhaps most important of all, however, was the impact of German anti-Semitic propaganda among the millions in the Red Army who fought the Germans. In their effort to produce disaffection among Soviet troops, German psychological warfare specialists bombarded Soviet troops with leaflets, newspapers, pamphlets, and front-line loudspeaker broadcasts full of lurid anti-Semitic propaganda. That some of this had its effect, this writer, as well as others, observed personally in conversations with Soviet soldiers in Berlin and on the border between the American and Soviet zones of Germany.

Prisoners of war captured by the Nazis were particularly indoctrinated with anti-Semitic views, and undoubtedly this played some part in inducing several hundred thousand former Soviet troops to fight for the Nazis under General Vlasov and other renegade leaders. The freed prisoners of war have now returned to the Soviet Union and many of them swell the number of potentially active anti-Semites in the USSR.

THE upshot of these various factors, it seems to this writer, is a substantial increase in the volume and virulence of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. How has the Soviet government reacted to this situation?

First, it must be pointed out that official government policy remains the same as before the war. The legal status of Jews has not changed.

Second, to the extent that increased anti-Semitism during the war is a by-product of German and anti-Soviet propaganda, the government fully realizes that it is linked with attitudes dangerous to the Soviet regime itself. For example, the Crimean Tatars, punished for their treachery during the

war by banishment to Siberia, were infamous before the struggle as particularly infected with hatred of Jews. The Kremlin's re-education and re-indoctrination program in the liberated areas, therefore, has concentrated upon stamping out anti-Semitism along with more general anti-Soviet attitudes. This has been apparent in some recent Soviet films, where Jews have been portrayed in a favorable light, and their co-operation with non-Jews has been a leading theme.

One hint that the effort to stamp out anti-Jewish feeling in the Ukraine has not been too successful, however, is the recent announcement that more than 1,000 Jews had been moved from Vinnitsa province in the Ukraine to Birobidzhan. In the present situation, with a tremendous labor shortage for Ukrainian reconstruction, it seems unlikely that the government would have moved these people eastward unless their presence caused serious difficulties of some sort.

Outside the liberated areas, however, the Soviet government seems to have taken a far less vigorous attitude toward the recrudescence of anti-Semitism. Some reports indicate that in the Eastern USSR anti-Semitic statements have been made in the presence of policemen or other officials without any punitive action having been taken. Such reports must be evaluated cautiously, but it seems likely that in the atmosphere of great postwar strain and sacrifice, the Kremlin would prefer not to add another irritant to the situation by actively combating anti-Semitism in areas where it was not directly related to anti-Soviet sentiment, as it so often is in the Ukraine. (A number of trustworthy reporters have noted a similar Communist policy of caution and appeasement in Soviet-dominated countries like Poland, Rumania, and Hungary.)

IN JUDGING the Soviet government's attitude toward Jews, one must also try to evaluate the rather impressive evidence of the continued decline of Jewish influence in the top circles of the Communist party, together with the fact that among the rising stars in

Soviet political life there appear to be no Jews in the first rank, though members of other nationalities besides the Great Russian are apparent.

Is this because of a deliberate policy of exclusion of Jews from the first-rank positions, or because of the different conditions under which the present adult population of the USSR was raised? For the last thirty years, it must be remembered, preferment in the Communist party and the Soviet government has been sought by all in the USSR, while before the Revolution, Jews, as members of a dissatisfied minority, played a role in the revolutionary movement far disproportionate to their importance in the population as a whole. It was only to be expected that Jewish influence in the leadership would wane. But even this does not adequately explain the almost complete absence of Jews from the current Soviet political limelight, when we consider the continuing importance of Jews in the Soviet intelligentsia generally.

A related phenomenon is the almost complete displacement of Jews as official representatives abroad. There are no Jews at present among either Soviet ambassadors to key countries or among the chief Soviet representatives in the UN and other international groups. The removal of Maxim Litvinov as Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs and of Ivan Maisky as Ambassador to Great Britain has been widely noted, but it has not been equally appreciated that their successors and the chief figures in the spotlight of Soviet diplomacy today include no Jews. Jews sent abroad in recent years as Soviet representatives appear to be mainly technical advisers or to hold unimportant positions.

Corroborative testimony on this point is given by reports of several American correspondents in Moscow that Jews are no longer accepted for diplomatic training in the Soviet Union. Harrison Salisbury, for example, notes that while he was in Moscow three vice-commissars in the foreign office were Jewish, but that he could not identify any of the junior attachés as Jews. He got the definite impression "Nordic" blondes were

receiving preference in the diplomatic field.

If, as seems likely, the Soviet government has deliberately decided to exclude Jews from among its chief representatives abroad, several factors are probably behind this decision.

First, there is the tremendous surge of Great Russian nationalism within the Soviet Union itself, a surge evidenced in the Soviet press by the constant harping upon the special role of the Great Russians in the supposedly equal Soviet family of nations. Second, there may be the "practical" consideration that anti-Semitism abroad might handicap any Jew representing the USSR. Finally, it is not unlikely that the Soviet government tends to associate Jews with an international outlook. In this period of Soviet isolationism and intransigence, Jews, members of a people having many ties to the West, not to speak of relatives in the various countries, may be felt to be unsuitable representatives of the postwar Soviet Union.

WHAT may be further relevant evidence concerning the problem of the Soviet government's attitude toward Jews, is the evident underplaying of the Jewish role in the USSR. In *Pravda* and *Izvestia* this writer has noticed that where Jews are honored for achievements of one sort or another, it is rare to find their Jewish nationality mentioned. Where a member of some other major minority group—Lett, Armenian, Uzbek, Ukrainian, etc.—is mentioned, this fact is often given prominence as testimony to the success of the overall nationalities policy. Perhaps the Soviet government, as a deliberate policy, does not wish to inform the bulk of its people of the true magnitude of the creative contribution being made by Jews today in all spheres of Soviet life, because it may increase popular resentment or for some other reason. But this seems hard to reconcile with the not infrequent mention of the Jewish autonomous region in the Far East (Birobidzhan) as fulfilling particular economic tasks.

An important final piece of evidence, on the more positive side of the scale, is the

appointment last spring of Lazar Kaganovich as the new boss of the Ukraine, the area particularly noted for its anti-Jewish feeling. Not only was Kaganovich's appointment in the nature of a defiance to anti-Semites, but it also exemplified Kremlin adherence to the policy of sending its most competent men to do a vital job. Kaganovich has for years been the Politburo's ace trouble shooter.*

Except for increased barriers to minimize direct contact of Jews with the Western world, there is no reason to predict that for the foreseeable future official Soviet policy toward Jews is likely to be changed. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the ambitious economic and political goals set by Stalin for the postwar period cannot be achieved except by mobilization of all resources available to the USSR. Any deviation from the present nationalities policy internally would require diversion of resources from economic reconstruction to the economically wasteful objective of persecution or discrimination. In the case of Jews particularly, any change of pol-

*One of the first discussions of Soviet anti-Semitism recently appeared in the December 29 issue of *Newsweek*. Part of the report, by Edward Weintal, diplomatic correspondent, follows:

"Solomon Mikhoels and Itzik Feffer, president and vice president respectively of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee [it is reported] called on Foreign Minister Molotov last month . . . to draw the foreign minister's attention to the growth of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. The Jewish delegation is also reported to have seen Politburo member Lazar Kaganovich, a Jew. Both Soviet officials promised that the government would take remedial action as soon as 'conditions are more propitious.'

"The specific complaint of the Jewish representative dealt with an unpublicized but nevertheless effective anti-Jewish policy which was first adopted by the Soviet Government at the time of the Soviet-Nazi 1939 pact . . . and has now been revived as a corollary to the Soviet anti-Western campaign. Under this policy Jews are to be eliminated from the armed services, from positions of influence on the masses, and from any activities which would bring them in touch with foreigners.

"The number of Jews in the Foreign Office has already been reduced to a minimum. . . . Jews have been barred from the diplomatic and language schools and from military academies. Jews holding positions of chairman of party or government committees have now been replaced. Most recently they have also been barred from dramatic schools. . . ."

icy now would be particularly expensive, for even after the slaughter of millions of Jews, they form an important portion of the USSR's scarce supply of skilled and technical trained personnel.

FROM a long-range point of view it would seem that, despite the aggravated popular anti-Semitism, the recent war has done much to speed the process of Jewish assimilation in the Soviet Union, already well advanced before the war. The ancient Jewish centers of Western Russia have been broken up. In the smaller Jewish communities of Western Russia, the inevitable disparities between numbers of men and women must encourage intermarriage, and the spreading of fairly isolated groups of Jews in the Central and Eastern parts of the Soviet Union must have the same result. Even before the war a significant number of persons born in Jewish households no longer regarded themselves as Jews and registered as members of other nationality groups: this tendency will be increased by the breaking up of large Jewish concentrations.

As for Jewish (i.e., Yiddish) culture, we have already referred to the undistinguished character of its contents. There is one Yiddish newspaper, appearing three times weekly, mostly filled with general news and exhortations to greater productivity. There are a few Yiddish theatrical companies and a school of dramatics in Moscow; like non-Yiddish theatrical companies, in response to official pressure in the "cultural" area, they have shifted from an emphasis on Yiddish and other classics, to plays on modern Soviet reality. A number of Yiddish books are published, mostly dealing with the war. The Yiddish school system that flourished in the 20's is now highly attenuated; there is very little information about it.

As B. Z. Goldberg, a consistent friend of the Soviet Union, wrote in the *Day*, August 14, 1946, after a six month trip: "There are no Jewish districts in the cities and towns, there are no specifically Jewish occupations, there are no Jewish hospitals, no Jewish old folks homes, no Jewish clubs, no Jewish

parties, no Jewish philanthropies, no Jewish educational institutions. . . ."

IF THE above analysis is correct, the present picture of Soviet Jewry is one compounded of lights and shadows rather than of bright spots alone, as painted by a Corliss Lamont or Itzik Feffer. In some respects, actually, there is a great resemblance between the current American and Soviet frameworks of Jewish life, since in both official quality and great opportunity for personal advancement exist in a setting marked by substantial if mainly latent hostility by part of the population.

But any picture of the situation of Jews in Russia must include the fact that they, like other citizens of the Soviet Union, live their lives in a society characterized not only by a low and decreasing standard of living, wretched housing, poor medical care, and severe production pressures, but by the absence of those general freedoms and civil liberties enjoyed in a Western democracy—the right to free speech, discussion, publication, assemblage, free group association and organization, protection from search and seizure, etc.—as well as such intangible privileges as the right to be different. These human gains represent the aspirations of Jews no less than of other peoples during the past two centuries, and for good and sufficient reasons which have to do with both their heritage and their previous disabilities, Jews have been in the forefront of the struggle for their achievement.

It is difficult to believe that they can consider their life satisfactory in an atmosphere where these are denied, not to speak of their fraternal desire to communicate freely with fellow Jews elsewhere in the world and maintain religious and cultural ties and relations of mutual aid. Constitutional equality and legal ordinances against anti-Semitism and economic discrimination are certainly important; but it is hard to regard the problem of the Jew, either as a human being or as a Jew, as solved in a country where stringent cultural uniformity and an all-pervasive dictatorial regime leave him free to be neither.